

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

One of the most important productive abilities for learning English as a foreign language (EFL), especially in junior high school, is writing. Through appropriate language use and text arrangement, writing allows students to convey ideas, thoughts, and experiences in written form. Writing is a complicated and recursive process that involves planning, composing, revising, and editing in order to accomplish communication goals, writing training should offer significant assistance to promote students' linguistic and cognitive development (Hyland, 2019).

Descriptive text is one of the required text kinds given to seventh-grade pupils in Indonesian junior high schools. The goal of descriptive writing is to provide readers with a clear picture of the subject by providing detailed descriptions of people, animals, locations, or objects (Derewianka & Jones, 2016). Students must have a sufficient vocabulary, comprehend the simple present tense, and be able to arrange thoughts into identification and description structures in order to write descriptive texts.

Preliminary observations at SMPN 1 Tanjungpinang, however, indicate that many seventh-grade students continue to struggle with producing descriptive compositions. Students frequently have a small vocabulary, which hinders their capacity to develop concepts and create

thorough descriptions. Because of this, their writing frequently lacks clarity, is brief, and deviates from the standard format of descriptive text. Weigle (2016) has documented similar difficulties with EFL writing, citing a lack of instructional support and a restricted vocabulary as the main barriers for EFL students.

The restricted use of learning resources in writing teaching is one element causing this issue. Teachers sometimes use traditional teaching techniques without enough visual aids, which might lower students' interest and motivation. According to Smaldino et al. (2019), educational media are crucial for improving students' comprehension and motivation to learn. Students can produce ideas and make connections between vocabulary and tangible representations with the use of visual learning materials.

Flashcards are considered a useful learning tool for expanding vocabulary and assisting in writing. Nation and Webb (2015) state that flashcards improve language memory by encouraging active recall and repeated exposure. Visual flashcards can help students form connections between words and images, which facilitates the formation of ideas for writing tasks. Therefore, it is believed that the use of flashcards will help students write descriptive texts more successfully (Teng, 2020).

Few research have explicitly looked at how flashcards affect junior high school students' descriptive writing abilities, despite the fact that numerous studies have looked at their utility in vocabulary learning. Thus,

the purpose of this study is to determine whether flashcard use affects seventh-grade students at SMPN 1 Tanjungpinang descriptive writing abilities.

1.2 Identification of The Problem

Based on the above background, several problems can be identified regarding the limited vocabulary of seventh-grade students at SMPN 1 Tanjungpinang in writing descriptive texts, namely:

1. Students still had limited English vocabulary, making it difficult for them to express their ideas accurately.
2. The lack of vocabulary caused students' writing to be very brief and lacking in detail.
3. Limited vocabulary also had an impact on students' low motivation in writing descriptive texts.
4. Teachers had not fully utilized learning media that can enrich students' vocabulary, such as the use of flashcards.

1.3 Limitation of The Problem

To ensure that this study was more focused and did not extend to other aspects, the problem in this study is limited to students' vocabulary through the use of flashcards. This study only focuses on seventh-grade students at SMPN 1 Tanjungpinang in the context of learning to write descriptive texts. Thus, this study does not discuss other writing skills

outside of descriptive texts, nor does it examine other English language skills such as listening, speaking, or reading.

1.4 Research Question

Based on the identification and limitation of the problems that have been described, the problem formulations in this study are “was there a significant effect of using flashcards on students’ descriptive writing skills at SMPN 1 Tanjungpinang?”

1.5 Research Objective

Based on the research question, the objective of the study was to determine whether the use of flashcards has a significant effect on students’ descriptive writing skills at SMPN 1 Tanjungpinang.

1.6 The Significances of the Study

It is anticipated this investigation would yield multiple advantages. For educators, it provides a summary of how well flashcards work as a straightforward yet effective teaching tool that can help students become more proficient writers of descriptive texts. It was anticipated the study will improve students' vocabulary, boost their motivation, and facilitated the creation of more detaile, organize, and communicative descriptive texts. In the meantime, this study offers researchers invaluable expertise in integrating classroom ideas into actual teaching situations. Along with preparing them for potential teaching professions, it also improves their comprehension of research techniques and teaching approaches. Finally, the

results of this study can be used as a reference and comparison by future researchers who wish to carry out comparable studies in different locations, with different focuses, and with different language proficiency.

1.7 Key Terms Definition

To avoid differences in interpretation in this study, several key terms are define as follows:

1. **Flashcards:** Flashcards are learning media in the form of cards with pictures or simple words/sentences used to help students understand, remember, and expand their vocabulary. In this study, flashcards were used to stimulate ideas and make it easier for students to write descriptive texts.
2. **Vocabulary:** Vocabulary is a collection of words that a person knows in a language. In this study, vocabulary refers to students' mastery of English vocabulary related to descriptive objects such as people, animals, places, and objects.
3. **Descriptive Writing:** Descriptive writing is a writing skill that aims to describe people, animals, objects, or places in detail so that readers can imagine the objects being described. In this study, descriptive writing skills are focused on descriptive texts in accordance with the seventh-grade junior high school curriculum.